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15 April 1968

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JFF  
office*

MEMORANDUM FOR:



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SUBJECT : Problem Areas in the RDC Program

1. On 1 April, responsibility for most -- but not quite all -- of the cadre program passed to the Department of the Army, acting as executive agent for the Department of Defense. This new situation, as we all know, did not terminate this Agency's problems with the program. Instead, it added certain new difficulties and complicated some of the difficulties we already faced in dealing with this complex and expanding activity. It seems to me that two quite different sorts of difficulties are likely to cause us trouble in the near to medium term future. First, the continued rapid expansion of the size of the RD program and the inevitable changes in the operational methods involved in our support for that program are going to confront this Agency with a range of policy and management decisions demanding urgent attention. Secondly -- less obvious but probably of equal importance -- I get the distinct impression from talking with my colleagues, including those to whom this memorandum is addressed, that there is (still) a very wide spectrum of opinion within the Agency concerning what the 1 April change-over does, or should, mean and what our future pacification support role accordingly will or ought to be.

2. On the actual operation of the new system, there appear to be four significant problem areas likely to bedevil us over the next 12 months, affecting Agency policy and, in turn, being affected by our policy determinations.

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a. Support: Our colleagues in the field, who are still responsible for running the program on the ground, will require three major categories of support: personnel, logistics and finance. In the personnel area, the most potentially troublesome problem will be that of the continued replacement of RDC advisors as officers (both staff and contract) now fulfilling such roles complete their tours. This problem will be compounded as the program expands and the total need for officers increases (this number could double over the next 12 months). There are obvious lead time and pipeline questions here, none of which are going to solve themselves. In the logistics area, though we have the capability to meet current programmed resource requirements, any significant increase in resource requirements or major change in the type of resources required could cause us, especially our Office of Logistics colleagues, considerable difficulty. In the finance field, there will almost certainly be increasing requirements for the collection of cost data for the Department of the Army (which takes its executive agent role very seriously). This may be essentially a Headquarters problem, but there will also certainly be a change in accounting methods and requirements and fund disbursing procedures which will add a considerable workload on our province officers and on the Station's Finance Section.

b. Army Agreements: Though the basic Memorandum of Agreement with the Army (or DOD) has been signed, the essential technical annexes are not yet agreed upon (or all drafted). Until these annexes are developed, we cannot clearly identify increased workload requirements or unavoidable procedural changes.

c. Program Flexibility: With the Department of the Army taking a strict view of its responsibilities and concomitant authority, we are bound to have much less flexibility than heretofore in meeting program changes dictated by field circumstances. Such changes will have to be identified early with some specific address to their likely impact on financial and resource input levels. The RD budget preparation cycle will almost certainly have to conform to Department of Army procedures which, in turn, will require more detailed preparation at an earlier date than has been necessary in the past under Agency ground rules.

d. Communications: Problems or difficulties arising in the areas cited above will necessitate detailed communication with the field, but the Memorandum of Agreement (to my mind) leaves unacceptably obscure the ground rules covering CIA Headquarters communication with our Saigon colleagues on RD matters.

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3. In addition to the specific technical difficulties indicated above, there remain the pitfalls of divergent internal Agency opinions on what the new system means or ought to mean. I understand that FE Division is already doing a staff study on the Agency's future role in RD. This will be a critically useful paper which will doubtless help clarify our thinking. I would like to suggest for your consideration, however, two additional steps that might be of benefit to us all:

25X1 a. It seems to me that it would be most useful to take advantage of [ ] who will soon be leaving to assume [ ] former responsibilities, to convene a round table discussion of all Agency components having direct interest in RD or some piece of the RD action. By getting together in concert we could surface and resolve differing views and get a common grip on our common problems.

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b. One specific suggestion I would like to table for consideration at such a discussion is that of appointing a full-time senior officer familiar with both the support and the operational aspects of the RDC program to coordinate all Headquarters dealings with both the field and with the Army on RDC matters. Such an officer would act as a single referent and referee. Organizationally he should be placed within the FE Division, which is charged with operational responsibility for the program, but he should work closely with other concerned Agency elements and be the single focal point for all contacts with the Department of the Army. He should carry sufficient personal rank to discharge these responsibilities and represent the Agency to the Pentagon and, hence, should probably be in the senior 15 or 16 grade range.

4. I have reserved the Director's Conference Room for 1500, Wednesday, 17 April for the purpose of holding the discussion outlined above and would appreciate your advising my secretary if this time is convenient for you or your designated representative to attend.

George A. Carver, Jr.  
Special Assistant for Vietnamese Affairs

cc: Ex. Dir. - Compt.

1- RDC Memorandum of Agreement file

1 - GAC Chrono ✓

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